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Jacksonville District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CORPS OF ENGINEERS TO MAKE RELEASES FROM LAKE OKEECHOBEE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began half of a Level 1 pulse release from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee River and the St. Lucie Canal today, Wednesday, March 3, 2004.

The Corps' South Atlantic Division approved a temporary deviation to the normal operations of Lake Okeechobee under Water Supply/Environment (WSE), which allows water managers to make additional releases up to a Level 1 pulse volume during this dry season. The deviation will be in effect through May 31, 2004.

Pulse releases are designed to mimic nature and provide discharges from the lake to the estuaries via the St. Lucie Canal to the east and the Caloosahatchee River to the west. They attempt to strike a balance between the lake's littoral zone and the estuaries. In the future, the ongoing Everglades restoration, known as CERP, is designed to provide storage for much of this water and minimize these types of releases.

Today's lake level is 15.38 feet-NGVD, in Zone D of the WSE (Water Supply/Environment) regulation schedule. This pulse release will continue for 10 days at an average rate of 800 cubic feet per second (cfs) to the Caloosahatchee

River and 365 cfs to the St. Lucie Canal. The pulse release will be made through Structures S-77 and S-80.

For further information, please call the Jacksonville District Corporate Communications Office at 904-232-2236 or (cell) 904-614-4976.